

American Painted Lady *Vanessa virginiensis* (Drury) (Lep.: Nymphalidae) on La Gomera, Canary Islands

We visited the Canary Island of La Gomera from 19 to 26 October 1999 mainly to look for *Hypolimnas misippus* L. Unhappily we saw no sign of that butterfly, but we did see sixteen other species. Most interestingly, on 20 October when visiting the town of Hermigua, we found larvae of *Vanessa virginiensis*. They were in nests woven in the leaves and flower heads of Jersey Cudweed *Gnaphalium luteoalbum* which was growing on gravelly, cultivated ground in the middle of the town.

We found the cudweed growing in a few other places, near El Cedro, Valle Gran Rey and in San Sebastian, but found no more larvae.

However this record from Hermigua does confirm that *V. virginiensis* is still resident on Gomera, from where it does not seem to have been recorded for many years.

The other species seen were:

Pieris rapae L. – widely distributed at low to medium altitude.

Pontia daplidice L. – seen at low and high altitudes. Larvae seen on *Hirschfeldia incana*.

Catopsilia florella Fab. – at low levels around *Cassia didymobotrya* planted in gardens. Ova, larvae and imago present; larvae parasitised by a Tachinid fly whose white ova and points of larval entry were clearly visible. One parasitised larva produced a perfect butterfly, another produced two tachinid fly pupae.

Colias croceus Geoffroy. Only one specimen seen in municipal gardens at San Sebastian.

Gonepteryx eversi Rehnelt. – common in the laurisilva above 600m, mainly on the north slopes of Garajonay.

Lycaena phlaeas L. – only a few seen at El Cedro (900m) and Temocodà (1200m).

Lampides boeticus L. – flying around *Trifolium* sp. in the hotel garden at Santiago.

Cycliurus webbianus Brullé – at both medium and high altitudes feeding on *Vicia bitumastica*.

The possibility of this species being used as a larva foodplant, when their more usual ones eg. *Adenocarpus* sp. are not in flower, could be investigated.

Zizeria knysna Trimen. – Seen at low levels in the hotel garden at Santiago and near the harbour and in gardens at San Sebastian. Observed ovipositing on *Amaranthus* sp. at the latter site. Also seen at El Cedro (900m).

Danaus plexippus L. – a few adults seen in the municipal garden at San Sebastian; no sign of ova or larvae on the vine-like *Asclepiadaceae* species growing there.

Vanessa atalanta L. – a few seen in the laurisilva.

Vanessa indica vulcania Godart. – seen in the laurisilva ovipositing on *Urtica morifolia* Poir.

Vanessa cardui L. – not common, seen occasionally at all levels.

Vanessa virginiensis Drury – see above.

Pseudotergumia wyssii gomera Higgins. – one very worn female at Pastrana (100m) near Targa.

Pararge xiphioides Stand. – observed at Pastrana and in the laurisilva near Temocodà (1200m) and Roque del Diablo (800m).

– D. HALL, 5 Curborough Road, Lichfield, Staffordshire WS13 7NG and
P.J.C. RUSSELL, Oakmeadow, Wessex Avenue, East Wittering, West Sussex PO20 8NP.